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Time flies
The art of fly tying on page 3

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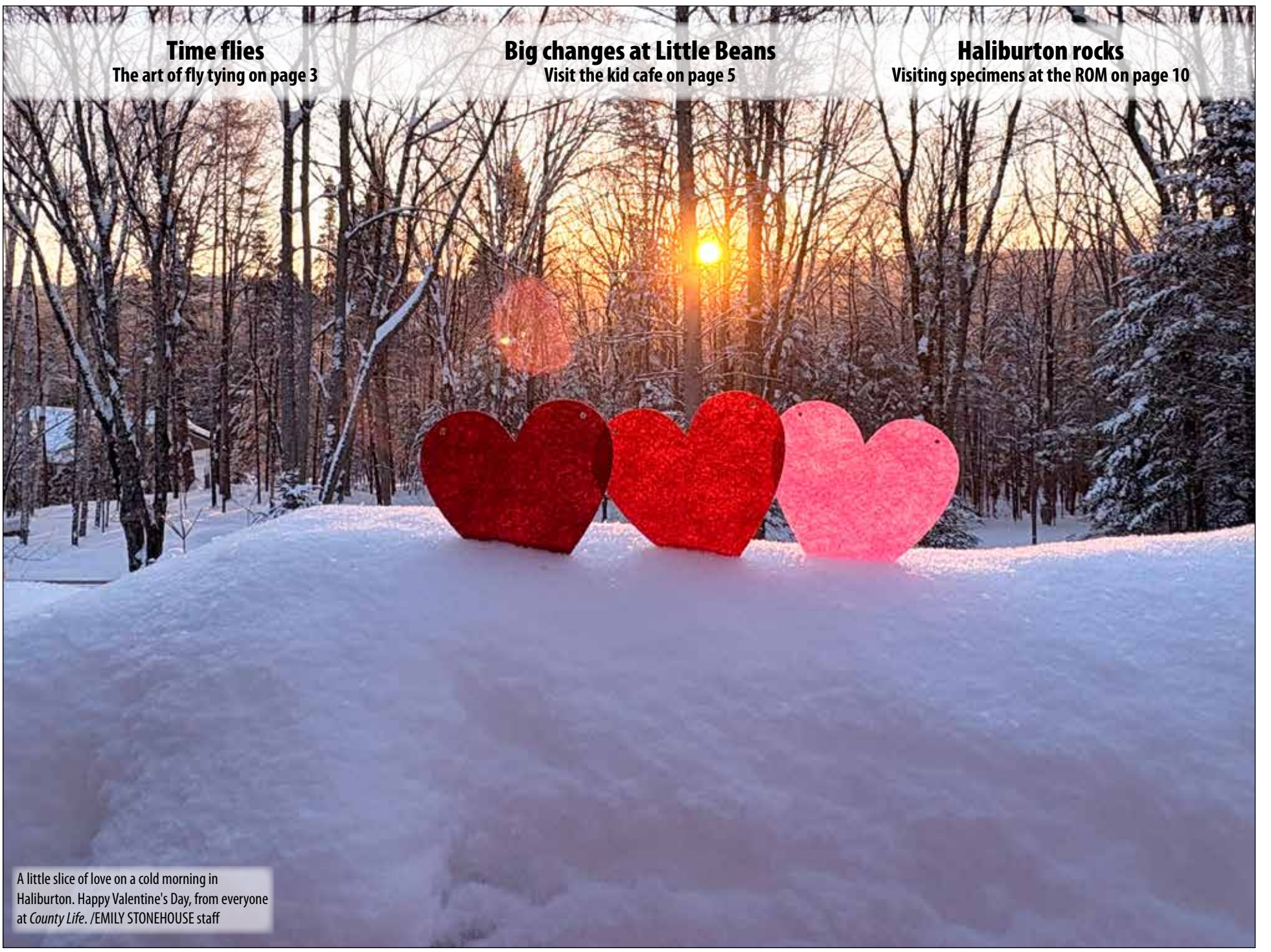
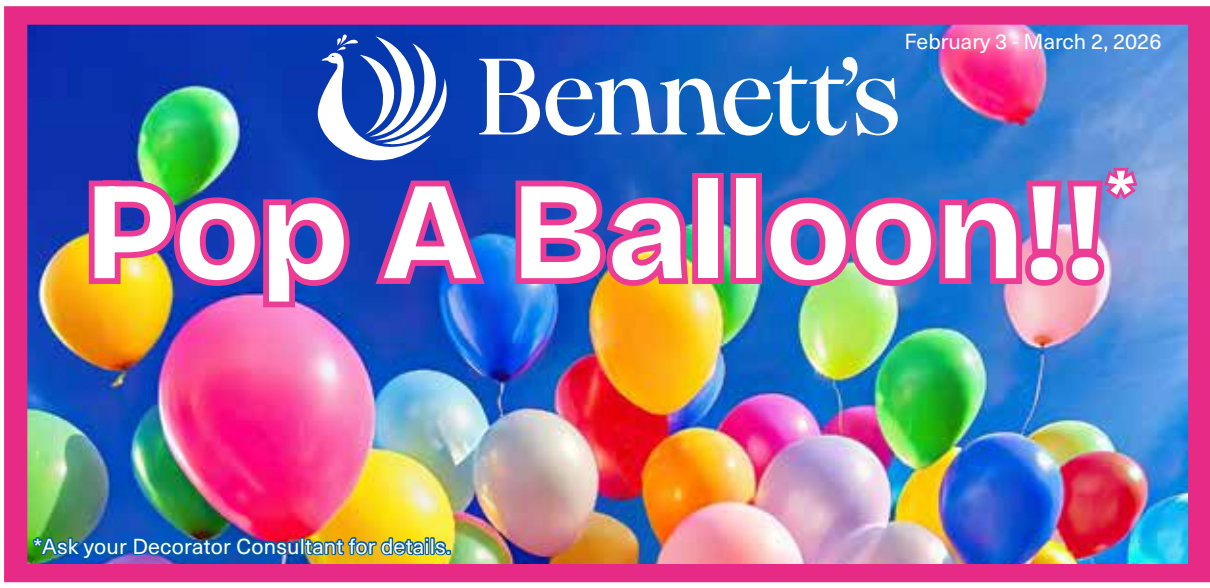


A little slice of love on a cold morning in Haliburton. Happy Valentine's Day, from everyone at *County Life*. /EMILY STONEHOUSE staff



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GEORGIE: *Carrots*

HI FROM Grade 6. I'm Georgie. No short form, no joke. I was named after my dad. He was named after his dad, and the dads before that. And so on and so on.

I'm an only child. If I was a boy, I'd be called George. I didn't like *Georgie* until this year. I'm still getting teased about it, and about my red hair. Teasing's ok. I'm used to it, and I tease right back. I think it means you care about somebody. It's another way of showing it. People say stuff like: *hey, hothead!* Or: *here comes the Spice Girl!* Relatives on my Mom's side have exactly this hair colour. Balding, buzzed, or long like mine. Some call themselves redheads. I just say *ginger*.

DEB REED
Wind in the Attic

Some names hurt me. I still hate being called *Pudding-and-Pie.* It's awkward, especially when they point and laugh. It's not like teasing, and I don't know if I should laugh along, or say it bothers me. I'm Georgie, and not a bunch of other names. I eat pudding and pie, so I don't get the joke.

I love animals. Especially bugs. When they're trapped indoors, I rescue them with a butterfly net and let them go. I hate when people step on spiders and centipedes because they're *ugly*. It's ok to be afraid of bees because they sting when they're scared. But it's not ok to just kill them. We need bees more than we need more little plastic toys.

My horse is my life. My books too. I keep all of them, even the tiny board ones I used to read in my stroller. I can't believe I once fit into a stroller, lol. I'm a little bit heavier these days, and I'm sometimes teased about that too. But only by a few girls in my class.

I noticed that my new teacher put a lot more books on the old shelves below the whiteboards. I can read the spines from my desk. There's *Anne of Green Gables*! I watched the whole TV series, and I love the part where Anne cracks Gilbert over the head with her slate after he calls her *Carrots!* She has long red hair too.

Miss Fields also bought *Charlotte's Web*, *The Little Prince*, *Aesop's Fables*, and *The Secret Garden*. Plus, there are novels I've never seen about Indigenous and faraway kids. I can't wait to borrow them. I loved the picture books in my Primary classrooms. Those teachers didn't lend them, though. I want to be an illustrator one day. My parents first met in a famous art college near here.

I have only one real friend in this class. It's a neighbour boy called Oscar. Most kids don't like him, but when he and I built a tree fort by ourselves two summers ago, we got along really great. He loves animals too. Play-dates with Oscar feel something like the carrots I reward my horse with. Something nice to look forward to every weekend.

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For information on how your flyer can be inserted each week in County Life please contact Melissa Armstrong at **613-332-2002** or **melissa@haliburtonpress.com**

The manly art of fly tying?

I LOVE tying flies in winter. It's a great outdoors-adjacent activity that's ideally suited to a long winter night. It prepares you for spring fishing but also brings back memories of flies you once had that are now tangled high up in riverside trees.

But, even I will admit, fly tying is not exactly a manly pursuit.

No one ever said, "Don't mess with that guy. He ties flies."

STEVE GALEA
Beyond 35

In fact, some of the most famous and influential fly tyers have historically been women. Helen Shaw, Carrie Stevens, Juliana Berners, Mary Orvis Marbury, Elizabeth Greig, Winnie Dette, Mary Dette Clark, Elsie Darbee, Helen Shaw, Megan Boyd, and Frances Stearns all have earned their places in history as incredible and innovative fly tyers. Deb Paskall, April Vokey and Kathy Ruddick are three Canadian women who are respected for their fly fishing and tying skills today.

Having said that, I know far more male fly tyers – and no matter how we try, it's difficult to make fly tying as butch we try to.

You probably think trappers seem pretty rugged right? Well, fly tyers have the same interest in furs – and we will tell you as much.

The difference is one of those groups would love to get their hands on a patch of polar bear fur dyed sunburst orange.

I'll leave you to guess which.

Sure, there are male fly tyers who try to make fly tying more masculine by sitting in their den at their fly-tying table drinking triple-malt Scotch and smoking big cigars. But that gets offset by the fact that they get way too excited about exotic feathers.

Put it this way. If a group of my fly-tying buddies were in a strip club and a dancer came on stage dressed solely in a feathered boa, I guarantee my buddies would be the loudest people in the place, yelling for her to take it off – but only so they could run off with the boa. And who can blame them? There's some great fly-tying material in those.

Not one of us is proud of this.

Also, when I call my fly-tying buddies, we have conversations in which we mute our voices when our spouses enter the room, but only because we don't want them to know that we have more furs, beads, and peacock feathers, and nail polish hardener than they do.

Sure, I only tie certain flies with duck and goose feathers from birds I took in the waterfowl season, and my bear, deer, rabbit, grouse and woodcock hides are from prior hunts too. But that only marginally discounts the fact that the coloured threads I have are from a boutique fly shop.

Also, as much as we hate to admit it, most fly tyers quickly tie as many flies as they need for fishing. After that, it's just a foray into art and design. And though we know it isn't manly to constantly send photos of our feather and fur creations to other afflicted men, we still do it. We just add sentences like, "This ought to slay those trout."

If you were hunting Cape buffalo in Africa, you'd have to accept that you might one day be gored by an angry bull. On the other hand, when you are tying trout flies, you have to accept that you might one day fray your expensive silk floss.

This is why we have a bit of an image problem.

They call fly fishing the quiet sport, but not for the reasons you think.

It's actually because no man wants to talk about the fly-tying part.

Eat the frog

I WAS reminded this week of one of my old sayings that I had not been using much recently: eat the frog. I am not sure where I first heard it or why it made particular sense to me. However, to me it is a phrase summing up the advice to do the thing that you have been putting off and probably doing a lot of other little easier things rather than it, for a long time.

TERESA JORDAN
Community Living Contemplations

I think we all do this, I know I have often had a huge project at the top of my to do list and will look at some easy wins first just to sort of get warmed up. Eat the frog. I guess I like the phrase too because there is nothing exciting or enticing about doing the big thing; it's going to be a bit hard, a bit complicated and often perilous.

This expands well beyond to-do lists at work. We can put off personal frogs like hard conversations, resolution type wellness goals, and reconnecting with friends that have grown distant. While it's a common experience to put off hard things, I think it is an equally common feeling of accomplishment, relief, pride and resolve when we finally do the things.

I googled the phrase and it came up that it originated from Mark Twain. In his autobiography, Twain says, "If it's your job to eat a frog, it's best to do it first thing in the morning. And if it's your job to eat two frogs, it's best to eat the biggest one first." I feel like Mark Twain is urging all of us to do the hard thing, and if it's part of a list of hard things, do the hardest first. Eat the frog, and then go on after that to do things far more enjoyable - that are more like eating the chocolate.

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Writing on the Senior Side

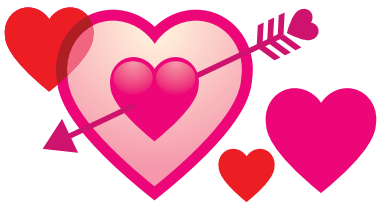
Cold staycation and Happy Valentine's Day

GAIL STELTER
County Life Contributor

The wind blows the snow off the trees. The biting cold makes for quick steps to the packed car. The car confirms another bitter cold day as it registers -22 Celsius. The roads are snow-covered. I think they call it centre-bare, but there isn't much bareness. Almost a white-out south of Minden. Not a pleasant drive all the way to Beaverton, and then, how lovely, the sun comes out, and the roads are clear. We sing along with 50s Gold. We are on our way to our staycation in Niagara Falls, but first, a stop in Grimsby to visit friends for lunch. I decide to check how far it is from their home to our hotel in the Falls. I put in the Double Tree Niagara Falls on my phone maps.

"What the …" The app shows the hotel location in Niagara Falls, NEW YORK! What have we done? We thought we booked a Canadian hotel. We are not crossing the border, ever. Even if we wanted to, we don't have our passports with us. Now what will we do?

Our friends are already offering to have us stay with them. No way. They are great, but this is my escape, my staycation.



Peter says, "That can't be right. I know the hotel is on the Canadian side."

I put it in maps again. This time, I am more careful: Double Tree Fallsview Inn and Spa, Niagara Falls, Ontario. And what to my delight appears, another Double Tree Hotel, the right hotel, the hotel we booked, on the Canadian side. And yet, I am not totally convinced. So, there are two Double Tree hotels, and I am still not sure if we booked the Canadian one. I phoned the Canadian hotel. Hurray, we are booked there for three nights. Thank goodness, we were not so careless as to have made such a mistake. Life is good again.

If Niagara Falls, Ontario, was part of your childhood, if you took your kids there from time to time for fun, for a baseball tournament or a birthday party at nearby Great Wolf Lodge, you have a connection to this wonder of the world. Go back now and experience the Flight Over Niagara attraction. It is spectacular, amazing and more, and since it just opened last August, you probably haven't participated. As we got into our seats and tightened our seatbelts, I said hello to the young man sitting next to me. You are not surprised. You know I enjoy meeting people. He is from Belgium, and I welcome him to Canada. People from all over the world do, indeed, come to the Falls. I am a little scared as the experience begins. The young man tells me I will be fine. Peter tells me this, too. It seems I am in good hands, and the "flight" is incredible. We "fly" over the Brock Monument and a reenactment of the battle of Queenston Heights. We "fly" into the Falls and along the Niagara River. I thought the virtual experience at the Titanic Exposition was awesome, and it was, but this is even more so. I cannot properly describe the feeling of anticipation, excitement and awe. I cannot properly describe the power and beauty of what I saw as my heart beat quickened and I held on tight. Peter and I are already planning to go back in the autumn to do it again.

The hotel was perfect. We had a delicious dinner at the steak and seafood restaurant. Peter said it was the best filet mignon he had had in many years, and although I sometimes feel "chickened out", my Tuscan chicken was also delicious. Pricy but perfect for a staycation.

We spent time at the pool and spa and met and chatted with fellow Ontarians from Burlington and Guelph.

The Flight Over Niagara experience is located at The Table Rock Centre. We drove by it twice before we figured out how to get into the parking lot. I find it hard to breathe when walking in cold and windy weather. Peter dropped me off as close as he could to the door, and I walked down the path and went inside. A workman heard my breathing and rushed over to see if I was okay. He looked panicked, and I told him I was fine, I just needed a place to sit down and catch my breath. He accompanied me to the closest bench. I am sharing this part with you because our Canadian stories always remind us of thoughtful people, strangers who care.

After the "flight," we had lunch at Table Rock Restaurant, a perfect window seat overlooking the Falls. We took pictures, and the hostess took a picture of the two of us. This reminded me of the first time Peter and I went to Niagara Falls together. I had that picture on my phone. How neat to juxtapose Peter and Gail in March 1967 with us now in 2026.

The next day, we planned to visit the Floral Showhouse. We were there twenty-two years ago, when it was called a botanical garden. Overnight, the temperature dropped so much that it was the coldest night ever! The Falls were freezing up. In my planning, Haliburton would be about -10 at this time of year, and The Falls would be warmer, maybe zero or above. I sure messed that one up. Too cold for me to breathe. It's all good, we'll get the flowers on our next "flight" visit.

I hope I have encouraged some of you to make the trip and take the flight. You will love it.

****

A Valentine Gift. Mom saw Peter first. It was a mild day in February. The recent thaw had melted most of the snow, and squishy bits of slush dotted the sidewalk. He had a larger square box under his arm. His stride was purposeful, a young man on a mission. He knocked at our door. I answered.

A hug and a kiss and "Where's your car?"

"I ran out of gas. It's at the gas station on the corner." He knows I have $2.00 for gas. He works part-time and gives all his money to his mom. She, in turn, gives him enough for gas and a little extra. It works well, but sometimes he is a little short, and I help out. We are already a team, and soon his mom will be on her own. No worries, she has another older son who will now have to help. I suspect that she doesn't need any help. She is a guarded saver.

My brother was in the living room listening. He dismisses his better thought to say nothing. "You two are getting married, and you can't even afford to put gas in the car?"

We ignore him. Peter gives me the box. Mom says that she thinks it›s a pizza. She's wrong. I open the box, and a giant red heart-shaped box of chocolates appears. I had never seen a box of chocolates that big. I had never received a box of chocolates for Valentine›s. I smiled and laughed, and another hug was definitely in order. I loved it. Sometimes, money spent on Valentine›s chocolate is more important than the $2.00 for gas. Later in our quiet time together, there was a handwritten poem to go with the chocolates. Young and in love is now an old and in-love memory.

Did your high school have Valentine fundraisers where a boy bought a red carnation for his girlfriend or to give to a girl as her "secret admirer"? My high school did. The flower was delivered on Valentine's Day to her homeroom class. I never got a carnation. I don't recall seeing many girls with flowers. I think the "secret admirer" thing was dying in the 1960s, as teens were becoming more forthright and those who were "going steady" had other gifts and plans.

I was about 13 or 14 when my mom surprised me with a Valentine›s Day "just because" gift: a lovely wallet. I was so pleased. Perhaps this is the year I will surprise someone with a just-because gift.

What about a Valentine›s night out for dinner or music and dancing? That sounds like a nice gift for the one you love. I'm thinking all day breakfast at a local restaurant is more to my liking. This is surely a sign of my life on the senior side: I›m not a fan of night driving in winter, and so tired by 8 or 9 o'clock at night, I want to go home.

Valentine memories and Valentine gifts are special and remind us of love. Love for others, some no longer with us, and love of self. Keep loving and find your way to enjoy or remember this special, lovely time of year. Happy Valentine's Day.

Little Beans changes hands and welcomes all

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

The new face(s) of Little Beans Play Cafe in Minden, Emma and her daughter are eager to welcome little ones to the space. /submitted

Many parents of Haliburton County will start to see a new face in Minden.

Emma Graves has taken over the business of Little Beans Play Cafe in the heart of Minden, and she has big dreams of making it a success. "When I think something is possible," the mom of four shared, "I just jump in with my heart first."

Little Beans was started by Janelle Nesbitt late last year. While Nesbitt had a vision for what the parents of the county needed, she felt she didn't have capacity to see it through. As a full-time nurse on top of being a business owner and a mom, Nesbitt knew she had a tough decision to make.

"While I loved creating this space, I realized I don't love owning a business the way I love being a nurse," said Nesbitt. "Nursing isn't just my job - it's my calling, and it's where I feel most fulfilled serving my community every single day."

When Graves caught wind that Nesbitt may be looking to sell the business, the gears started turning in her mind. As a mom of four, ages 18, 16, 14, and eight months, she had plenty of experience working with kids of all ages and stages.

While she has a background in human resources and consultancy, her sparkle truly starts to shine when she's working with kids. During a turning point in her life, Graves started working at Compass Early Years Centre in Minden. During that time, she became pregnant with her fourth child, and as she navigated maternity leave with her daughter, Posey, the opportunity to step into Little Beans started to take shape.

"I'm the type of person who can't sit still," said Graves. "We came (to Little Beans) all the time, and I believe in this space so much."

Graves has been working with Nesbitt over the past month to streamline the transition process between ownership, and stepped into the lead role as of Feb. 1. "Knowing that Emma can walk in turnkey, pour her passion and expertise into this space, and make it even more beautiful brings me so much peace," said Nesbitt. "Growth sometimes looks like building, and sometimes it looks like honouring where your heart truly belongs."

With additional programs on the roster for the space, including a caregiver circle presented by the Haliburton Midwives, infant CPR and first aid training, PA Day enrichment programs, a games club, and an infant circle around healthy sleeping habits, the play cafe offers a wide variety of programs and services to parents and kids alike. "We can get more visibility through community partnerships," said Graves. "I'm the type of person who will try everything to see what works for the community."

While Graves is optimistic about the future, she is also mindful of the fact that small businesses don't always succeed. "I'm nervous about that," she said. "But I am not letting that control me … I 'm a spontaneous person, and a big dreamer, and I definitely believe that everything is possible."

Little Beans Play Cafe is located at 101 Bobcaygeon Road in Minden. More information can be found at www.littlebeansplaycafe.net.

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Steve Galea, Contributor
Laura Smith, Paul Banelopoulos Ad Sales
Classifieds, Amanda Gonyea Inside sales
Karen London, Production Co-ordinator
Stacey Potalivo, Production

146 Highland St., Box 360, Haliburton, Ontario K0M 1S0
Phone: 705 457-1037

Website: www.haliburtonecho.ca
Box 97, Minden K0M 2K0
Phone: 705 286-1288
Website: www.mindentimes.ca

Send your letters to the editor to emily@haliburtonpress.com. Letters must be signed and include a phone number.

County Life is produced by The Haliburton County Echo and Minden Times, and published by White Pine Media Corp. Audited circulation: 6,372 July 1 - Dec 31, 2015

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Have a heart

IT'S THAT time of year when we see cinnamon candies and red and pink garlands in the shape of a heart. Hearts are everywhere. They adorn the windows of our local shops, they're swirled into icing at the bakery grocery store, ready to be shared amongst lovers.

EMILY STONEHOUSE
County Life Editor

It's common knowledge that the actual heart doesn't look remotely like the candy cutter shape we've all grown to know and love around Valentine's Day. In reality, it's a lumpy organ that keeps the beat of our day to day. If we don't take care of it, it won't take care of you.

So why do we have the association of the heart shape on Valentine's Day? There are a few speculations. Some suspect that it was a version of the anatomical heart drawn by medieval artists, while others think it portrays the seedpod of the ancient Cyrenian plant Silphium, which was used as a contraceptive and associated with love.

As is the case with most mega marketing campaigns, the symbol gained popularity during the Victorian era, with upper-class folks exchanging cards, candy, and flowers to showcase everlasting love. It's been stuck in our society ever since as common practice.

But why was the heart seen as the centre for love? Scientifically, we now understand that the feeling of love and lust stems not from the heart as an organ, but from the brain. When we feel these emotions, we get shots of dopamine sent straight through our brain waves; an impact that is significant enough to even make our pupils dilate when we look at someone we love.

Every so often, we feel a flutter in our hearts. This is nothing more than a little boost of adrenalin from our brain, alerting us that there is a significant feeling occurring in the body.

But in ancient times, this was seen as a tell-tale sign of love stemming from the very core of the body. It was noted that even great philosophers such as Aristotle and Sappho believed that the heart was the centre of all emotions, all feelings, all bodily decisions, all motivation.

Just based on those little flutters.

This is the science behind the concept of love. But I have long believed that there is more to it. There has to be.

Because love isn't black and white. It's messy and illogical and uncontrolled. I've often wondered about the reasoning behind it. There are elements that carry certain levels of attraction where one can connect the dots around types and interests, but for the most part, our heart carries us on a weaving and winding trail; one where the final destination is uncertain.

And I find that truly beautiful.

In a world where we make every effort to meticulously plan our next steps, the person we fall in love with isn't always the one who fits the ideal description. Sometimes love makes us go off the rails, gain a new perspective, or fold in on our beliefs we once held close.

I've been lucky enough to feel many different types of love. Love for my job, love for connections. I've felt love for a place, for friends, for dear animals that carve their way into your heart. I've felt love for partners, for parents, for a space that feels safe.

And I know that flutter is real. When I watch my son and my husband hug after a long day. When I watch my girls high five one another in support. When I turn off the lights while I see my kids' eyelashes flutter, or snap a picture as they hold hands, walking through the forest.

It's a love so deep it nearly hurts as it courses through my veins.

There's more to it than science and reason.

There's colour and chaos and whimsy and wonder.

And how lucky are we, to feel it.

Top 10 reasons the groundhogs might be wrong

GROUNDHOG DAY has come and gone, and with that the predictions. Some people want to believe the groundhogs. After all, they are cute, nattily attired, and generally confident in their shadows.

STEVE GALEA
Humour Columnist

I'm not so confident in their abilities, however. Here are my top 10 reasons why.

1. With all the marijuana being grown, who knows what they've been eating?
2. They're going to say anything to lose all the paparazzi.
3. They get their forecasts from the same place you do.
4. Pretty sure they're just messing with us.
5. Not one of them is a climatologist.
6. The one that predicted long winter is trying to sell a ski resort.
7. If they're wrong, are you really going to sue a groundhog?
8. With all those camera flashes around them, who knows which shadow to use?
9. Funny thing: weather prediction is not their area of expertise.
10. This, and shooting at them, are our only two meaningful interactions.

Intertwined

Boot prints branding the unsullied Snow,
my own, follow, as I clomp along the trail beneath an alabaster Sky,
clouds of my Breath smearing Air before they disappear, like the deer prints dimpling Snow, veering off into the forest sprawling beyond the trail, where the bare trees stand stoic among the pines,
enduring another winter in the silence of their company, quiet so loud, I hear my Breath breathe,
my eyes scouring the trees for squirrels or chickadees, the deep freeze keeping them cocooned in their nests,
or maybe in the hollows of trees, the cold numbing the tip of my nose, piercing my bones, as I keep clomping along the trail, passing a boulder shrouded in a cap of Snow, where I pause to slap it Hello, grazing the spindly spine of its Siamese twin,
a pine springing from the shoulder of the boulder, its roots slithering beneath its skin of Snow, growing crooked, its branches mingling with the branches of other pines that grow alone,
their roots free to slither beneath the frozen earth, their spines stretching high up towards Sky, while this spindly pine's trunk, shorter than the others, curves like a vertical River through Air,
sharing its breathing space with the other pines, but its roots remain forever intertwined with the boulder and the crack in its shoulder where a speck of earth and a seed birthed the crooked pine into being,
I marvel each time I pass the pair, at their rare connection,
wondering whether the pine feels cramped as the branches of other pines tower over it,
and whether the boulder somehow knows that the pine is a part of it, inseparable as the boulder and the earth on which it squats, and I wonder what will happen when the pine withers someday, and the boulder remains,
whether it will miss its Siamese twin, that survived the seasons with it, the Snow cap that cloaks it now, melting in spring, trickling into the roots of the pine, nourishing it like Rain, I linger here, a little while longer,
my frozen nose and clattering bones forgetting for a moment about the cold,
marveling at the small miracle that a speck of earth and seed created, in a crack between the boulder's back and shoulder, the curve of the pine's spine reaching up towards an alabaster Sky, canopied by the branches of taller pines,
bearing the burden of Snow, I peel off my mitt to graze the grooves in the pine's roots, flowing along the boulder, feeling the curve in the tree where it begins to grow upwards, no longer touching the boulder,
attached to it but growing on its own, on the fringe of the trail that sprawls into a forest,
where bare trees stand alongside the pines, enduring winter in silence, alone together, like the boulder and the crooked pine, their lives forever intertwined.

Sylvie Kalenda

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Out Standing In Our Field

Haliburton rocks the ROM

THOMAS SMITH
County Life Staff

With artifacts from across the globe and fantastic specimens of animals, rocks, and minerals from across Canada, visitors may not expect to see representation of Haliburton County on display at the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM).

Over this past winter break, I took a trip into Toronto to visit the ROM. While looking through the Earth's Treasures room, I was surprised to see a sample of graphite from Haliburton, as well as samples of fluororichterite from Wilberforce.

Curious to connect Haliburton County to the most famous museum in Canada, I was graciously able to contact Veronica Di Cecco, a collections technician in mineralogy from the ROM.

"Haliburton County and Hastings are the two places in Ontario we have the most samples from," said Di Cecco.

The ROM has only a small selection of samples on display for the public, about two per cent.

In their collection, the ROM has 653 specimens collected from Haliburton County.

Di Cecco estimates over 110 species of minerals can be found in the collection from Haliburton County.

"Haliburton County is famous for uranium in the mineral world," said Di Cecco.

Other species in the collection include fluorite and samples from the world's largest zircon deposit, she said.

Zircon is crucial in the manufacturing of ceramics and the dentistry industry. Zircon is also used to determine the age of rocks.

These species are just a small fraction of the 6,000 total number of mineral species on our planet. The ROM strives to collect examples from across Canada and internationally, when required for their extensive collection.

"It's like Pokemon, we try to catch them all," said Di Cecco.

The ROM has three ways of getting species for their collection including donations from the public, purchasing them, and harvesting them themselves.

The specimen of graphite that I saw on display as part of their Critical Minerals display was donated by H. E. T. Haultain to the University of Toronto in April of 1917. The ROM became a separate entity from the University in 1968.

"The number is very early for our collection," said Di Cecco.

Haultain was a civil engineer who was responsible for creating the Iron Ring ceremony in Canada, with help from Rudyard Kipling.

The fluororichterite sample on display from Wilberforce is labelled to be from the George Earle Farm. In 1986, the widening of the road exposed a large formation of fluororichterite. A representative from the ROM rushed to the area to collect some specimens. Prior to the 1980s, fluororichterite was only believed to be found in Russia.

To complete the roadway, the ROM reported that all of the fluororichterite had either been harvested, or destroyed by construction.

While the exposed fluororichterite is heavily depleted, portions of the deposit remain protected in the County.

"In many cases, the ROM is a repository for the Earth's geologic history," said Di Cecco.

The Highlands Express from August of 1979 reports that some of the semi-precious stones that can be found in the surrounding areas of Haliburton County include sodalite, apatite, fluororichterite, amazonite, and trilliumite.

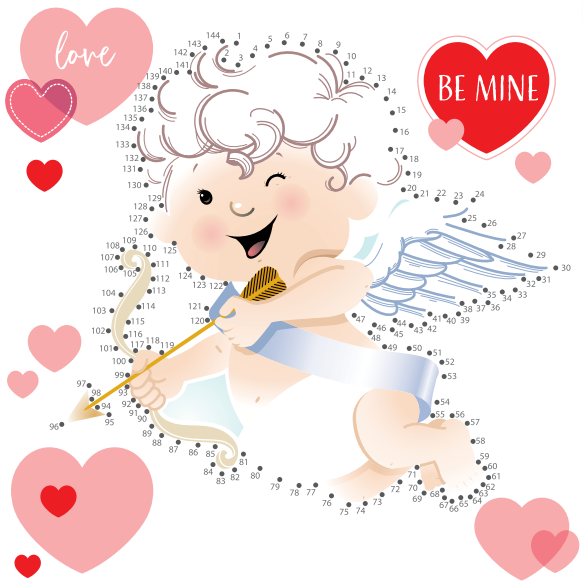
Tory Hill is famous for having the mineral titanite. Di Cecco says that one specimen she is fond of is "not very pretty" but it makes up for in its size.

The reason for Haliburton County's prolific amount of specimens is due to the situation on top of Grenville Province. The Grenville province can be imagined as an ancient mountain range that has been eroded over a billion years, filled with rocks and minerals.

Critical Minerals is a new gallery installation that was put on display in September of last year. The purpose of the installation is to shine a light on the minerals that will be needed towards a net zero society.

see page 11

Happy Valentine's Day



Spelling Scramble

Unscramble these love-ly letters!

DUIPC _____
ADYCN _____
TREHAS _____
CERNOMA _____
RWOAR _____

ANSWERS: cupid, candy, hearts, romance, arrow

Just for Laughs

What did the octopus say to their valentine?

I want to hold your hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand, hand!

Why are roses so popular on Valentine's Day?

They're scent-imental!

What did the magnet say to the refrigerator?

I'm very attracted to you!

Why did the monkeys get married?

They were bananas about each other!

Minerals sought after for answers

from page 10

Many countries, including Canada, have agreed to work towards net carbon neutrality.

The example of graphite as mentioned earlier, from Haliburton, is important to the use of graphite in technology. In an electric vehicle, about 60 kilograms of its weight is from graphene, a thin layer of graphite used in batteries.

Critical minerals are discussed frequently in the news cycle. Necessary for green energy solutions and to support population growth, the supply of critical minerals is under threat with exploding demands for technology. The exhibit is intended for visitors to consider their impact and demand for critical minerals.

While Canada currently relies on foreign countries like China for resources, there are plenty of sources of cobalt, nickel, copper, graphite, lithium and rare earth metals in Canada itself.

A lot of thought and care goes into deciding on the pieces for exhibits at the ROM. An iconic cultural institution of Ontario, Di Cecco chose specimens that are exemplary of their species. Ultimately, she hopes kids are inspired by their visit and fall in love with the sciences just as she had.

"It is the reason why I do this job," said Di Cecco ."So much of it is being able to help kids like me."

The Critical Minerals installation will be on display until Jan. 3, 2027. If you are interested in the scientific history of Ontario, the ROM currently has an exhibition titled Crawford Lake: Lawyers of Time on until Sept. 13 of this year.

Crawford Lake, located just outside of Milton, Ontario. The lake is meromitic, meaning that its surface water and deep water do not mix. Due to this, the lake is a perfect case study for analyzing sediment at the bottom to analyze different epochs of time. Crawford Lake has been determined as a global reference point for Earth's stratagraphical record. A similar meromitic lake, Blackcat Lake, was a contender to be part of a World Conservation Site in 2004.

Haliburton County may be one key in the puzzle of Canada striving towards a self-sufficient green energy future.

The Royal Ontario Museum will be having open Rock, Mineral, Gem, and Fossil ID Clinics this year. Attending the ID clinic is free, with ROM staff or a volunteer identifying the sample you bring in. So far, two meteorites have been authenticated with this program.

"Go to the ROM, go to your local museum, go out for a hike," asks Di Cecco.

This graphite specimen was in the collection of H. E. T. Haultain and donated to the Royal Ontario Museum after his passing. Originally harvested in Haliburton, this specimen is currently on display in the new Critical Minerals installation, on display until Jan. 3, 2027. /Courtesy of ROM (Royal Ontario Museum), Toronto, Canada.

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Legion Events

Branch 441 Kinmount

Monday: Bid Euchre 1 p.m.
Tuesday: Closed
Wednesday: Mixed Darts, 7:30 p.m.
Thursday: Closed
Friday: Bingo- Doors open at 5 p.m., play at 6:45 p.m. Supper specials every Friday starting at 5 p.m. May purchase special and eat in club room downstairs. Clubroom opens at 4 p.m.
Saturday: Clubroom opens at 3 p.m. Meat draw 5:30 p.m.
Special events:
3rd Thursday of the month 7 p.m. executive meeting and 7:30 p.m. general meeting (members only)
3rd Sunday of the month Ladies Auxiliary Meeting (members only)
Hall rentals available at reasonable prices. Call 705-488-3462 or 705-928-7105. We welcome everyone to our events and we look forward to seeing you!

Branch 129 Haliburton

Mondays: Bridge 1 p.m. Schofield Rm. Youth darts 6:30 to 8 p.m. Clubroom 10 to 18 years of age. All are welcome, no experience necessary
Tuesdays: League darts 7 p.m.
Wednesdays: Bid Euchre 1 p.m. start – Main Hall. Bingo doors open at 6 p.m. Bingo 7 p.m. FirstWed of each month with jackpot. Follow Facebook.com/Branch129 Bingo for the most up-to-date information
Thursdays: General Meeting third Thursday of the month, 6:30 p.m. All members urged to attend. Ladies Auxiliary last Thursday of the month at 1 p.m.
Fridays: Five meat draw, five prizes each draw, first draw 4:30 p.m., last draw 6:30 p.m. Tickets $2 per draw. Paul Sisson, MC. Friday fun darts from 4:30 p.m. and onwards. 50/50 Draw 5:40 p.m.
Whether you're planning a function for 10 or 200, call Cheryl Waller at 905-447-7741, email haliburtonlegionrentals@gmail.com or visit haliburtonlegion.com. Everyone is welcome! Club room hours: Mon. 3 to 6 p.m., Tues. 3 to 9 p.m., Wed/Thurs. 3 to 6 p.m. Fri. 3 to 7 p.m.

Branch 636 Minden

Lunch - Monday to Friday
Monday: Rug Hookers every second week. Bid Euchre 1 to 3 p.m.
Tuesday: Food 5 p.m. Canoe FM Bingo 6 p.m.
Thursday: Cribbage 1 to 3 p.m., Darts 7 to 9 p.m. and Euchre 7 to 9 p.m.
Every other Friday: Karaoke 8 to 11 p.m.
Friday Fish & Chips, Wings. Lunch 11a.m. to 2 p.m. and Dinner 4 to 7 p.m.
Saturday All Day Breakfast 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. with three Meat draws at 11 a.m.
Call ahead any day for take-out: 705-286-4541.
Schedules are subject to change without notice.
Check our Facebook page Minden Legion Branch 636 for more info.

Branch 624 Wilberforce

Hours - Sunday: Special Events Only, Monday: 7 to 10 p.m., Tuesday: Special Events Only, Wednesday: 2 to 10 p.m., Thursday: 2 to 6 p.m., Friday: 2 to 11 p.m., Saturday: 2 to 7 p.m.
Mondays: Feb. 16, 23 Darts $5/player 7 p.m.
Tuesdays: Feb. 17, 24 Veteran's and Seniors Exercise Club 1:30 p.m.
Wednesdays: Feb. 18, 25 - Darts $5/player 2 p.m.
Quick Supper Menu changes weekly $10. 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Open Cribbage 6:30 p.m. – No need to pre-register
Thursdays: Feb. 12, 26 HHHS Social Rec 10 a.m.
Fridays: Feb. 20 Fish and Chips 1pc/$15, 2pc/$20. 5 to 8 p.m.
13, 27 Wings and Jam Session $15/lb. 5 to 8 p.m.
13, 27 Community Care 55+ Lunch $20. noon
Saturdays: Feb. 14, 21, 28 Meat Draw 3 p.m.
Feb. 14 Ken McFarlane Memorial Family Day Lake Trout Ice Fishing Derby. Weigh in 3 p.m. Register at the Legion before closing on Feb. 13.
Feb. 14 Valentine's Day Dance 8 p.m. to 1 a.m.
Feb. 28 Nacho Average Trivia 7pm. $5/Player
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Community Events

Send your event listing to classifieds@haliburtonpress.com

Genealogy for Seniors
When: Friday, Feb. 13 from 11 a.m. to noon at the Dorset Library, or 1:30 p.m. at the Stanhope Library
Join us for an inspiring introduction to family history research led by Adele Espina of the Haliburton Highlands Genealogy Group, with support provided by the Government of Ontario. This workshop will walk you through the steps of building your family tree – from locating historical records to organizing your research and uncovering stories from your past.

Tech Help Walk-in-Clinic
When: Friday, Feb. 13 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Stuck on a tech problem? First come, first served. Each person gets a 30-minute session with library staff to tackle one specific technology challenge. One session per person per day.

Fun Winter Craft
When: Saturday, Feb. 14 anytime between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.
Where: Dorset Library
Pop into the Dorset library during the Dorset Snowball Carnival. Make a snowy craft like a snowman or snowflake to take home, and check out a winter-themed book.

Special Screening of Cindrella
When: Saturday, Feb. 14 from 1 to 3 p.m.
Where: Minden Hills or Dysart (Haliburton Village) Library
A timeless story filled with kindness, courage, and a little bit of magic. No registration required. Movie is rated PG.

Animal Tracks and Signs or Children
When: Sunday, February 15 from 10am-Noon
Where: Haliburton Outdoors Association - Fish Hatchery
Children from ages 5 to 2 will enjoy hands-on activities and a walk outdoors led by Outdoor Educator Rick Whitteker. An adult must accompany the registered child. Event is offered by donation with funding from TD Friends of the Environment Foundation and with thanks to Abbey Gardens for the use of materials and for the booklet development. Pre-registration is required. Registration for this event and for all other Land Trust Discovery Days events should be done online at www.haliburtonlandtrust.ca under the Events tab.

Shrove Tuesday
When: Tuesday, Feb. 17 from 5 to 6:30 p.m.
Where: St. Paul's Anglican Church, 19 Invergordon Ave, Minden
Pancakes and Sausages, Dessert & Coffee or Tea. By Donation.

Genealogy for Seniors
When: Wednesday, February 18 from 1-2pm at the Gooderham Library or 3pm at the Wilberforce Library
Join us for an inspiring introduction to family history research led by Adele Espina of the Haliburton Highlands Genealogy Group, with support provided by the Government of Ontario. This workshop will walk you through the steps of building your family tree – from locating historical records to organizing your research and uncovering stories from your past.

SALC Needle Felting Chocolate-Covered Strawberries
When: Thursday, Feb. 19 from 2 to 3 p.m.
Where: Dysart Library (Haliburton Village)
Learn how to needle-felt a strawberry. All materials provided. Offered in partnership with the Government of Ontario, supporting social connection, creativity, and well-being among older adults in our community. Registration required. Call 705-457-2241 or email programs@haliburtonlibrary.ca to register.

Tech Help Walk-in-Clinic
When: Friday, Feb. 20 from 10 a.m. to noon
Where: Wilberforce Library
Stuck on a tech problem? First come, first served. Each person gets a 30-minute session with library staff to tackle one specific technology challenge. One session per person per day.

SALC Needle Felting Chocolate-Covered Strawberries
When: Friday, Feb. 20 from 1 to 2 p.m.
Where: Dorset Library
Learn how to needle-felt a strawberry. All materials provided. Offered in partnership with the Government of Ontario, supporting social connection, creativity, and well-being among older adults in our community. Registration required. Call 705-457-2241 or email programs@haliburtonlibrary.ca to register.

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Nature in your backyard

County Life welcomes photo submissions depicting life in the Highlands. Email emily@ haliburtonpress.com. Please ensure images are high resolution - 200 dpi, 10 inches at its longest edge.

Barred Owl by Tammy Nash

Blue Jay in snow by Jill Moulton

Deer in the sunshine by Debi Ireland

Pileated woodpecker by Debi Ireland

Male fisher by Tammy Nash

Winter moon by Jill Moulton

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THE HALIBURTON COUNTY
ECHO
The Voice Of The Highlands Since 1882
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1997 Vol. 114, No. 52 • 32 PAGES 90 cents (incl. GST)

Barber report says councils can trim up to $1.25-million

by PETER DOWNS
Staff Reporter

There's "no compelling justification" for Haliburton County to restructure its government system, says a consultant, who believes municipal politicians can slash at least $1.25-million from their spending.

By increasing their efficiency and sharing more services, municipalities should be able to convince the province there's no advantage to them amalgamating, says David Barber.

The county paid Barber's consulting company $15,000 to examine each municipality's financial books in a line-by-line search for savings.

After a county report ruled against moving to a one-tier system, politicians wanted an outside specialist to help determine whether they could justify maintaining two levels of government.

Last week Barber delivered his report at a meeting attended by nearly all members of the county's 10 municipal councils.

"The whole thrust of this (provincial) government is to see that services are delivered more efficiently," he reminded the politicians. "One of the chief ways they want to do that is through amalgamating municipalities ... In this study I believe we've come up with another option."

Barber recommends the county's two-tier system — 10 municipal councils and a county council — stay intact. But he says they should become more interdependent, cutting duplication where possible and sharing more services.

He also suggests that municipalities can greatly reduce their costs by setting common levels of spending — benchmarks — for all major functions and striving to meet them.

If councils stick to the benchmarks Barber's report sets for road maintenance, general government expenditures and other costs, they could save up to $1.25-million, he said.

And if they develop benchmarks for all of their expeditures, municipalities should be able to reduce their spending even further.

"There are some really siginificant savings to be had here," he said.

Barber selected spending benchmarks by looking at how much it cost each municipality to perform various functions and setting a level slightly higher than the lowest price for each service.

For example, the report found municipalities spent between $80 per household (in Dysart) and $450 per household (in

See BENCHMARKS page 4

SNOW FUN!

The Snowfest activities on Head Lake during the weekend, attracted hundreds of snowmobilers, but it was also very much a family affair. At left, snowmobilers line up to test their speed on the radar run while above, two-year-old Victoria Etheridge of Maple Lake wishes she could take a run at it too. More photos page 8

Hospital cuts are twice the amount expected

by MARTHA PERKINS
Editor

As it begins planning for its next fiscal year, the healthcare board is going to have to cope with a grant cut which is twice as big as expected.

Foster Loucks, the executive director of Haliburton Highlands Health Services, was notified last week that the Ministry of Health was reducing its grant by 5.3%. Based on correspondence last spring, when the hospitals fell under the jurisdiction of St. Joseph's Health Centre in Peterborough, the board had thought the grant cut would be 2.5%.

On a budget of $2.16-million to run both the Haliburton and Minden Hospitals, that means a reduction of $130,000.

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"Those are real dollars that come off the top," says Loucks. "It will up the ante a lot on what we can retain in services. It will obviously put more pressure on us."

Compared to larger hospitals such as St. Joseph's, which suffered a cut of 8%, and Ross Memorial Hospital at 6%, the 5.3% reduction doesn't seem as bad "but 5.3% on a small budget is still very difficult to accommodate."

There are opportunities to make up the loss by generating revenue locally, but Loucks says "there's only so much other revenue you can generate."

Asked to give an example of what $130,000 means to the hospitals' budgets, Loucks says that with an average wage of $35,000 a year, it's the equivalent of four staff positions.

At the recent HHHS board meeting, chairman Hugh Nichol stressed how imperative it was to start construction on the new facilities as early as possible. Running two small sites makes it very difficult to realize any economies of scale, he said, and the new facilities will help to alleviate some of the board's financial stress.

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